



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Luke Clippinger, Chair and
Members of the Judiciary Committee

FROM: Chief of Staff David Morris, Co-Chair, MCPA, Joint Legislative Committee
Sheriff Darren Popkin, Co-Chair, MSA, Joint Legislative Committee
Andrea Mansfield, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee

DATE: February 17, 2022

RE: **HB 764 – Department of Human Services – Missing Individuals - Reporting**

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **SUPPORT HB 764**. This bill seeks to strengthen procedures followed by DHS when a child placed under a guardianship is missing.

As introduced, MCPA and MSA had concerns because the language of the bill would have permitted notification to law enforcement to occur within 24 hours after discovery. Language in the bill also referred to individuals and not children. Amendments offered by the sponsor addresses both circumstances.

When a child in guardianship goes missing, time is of the essence. These children may be suffering from a mental or physical handicap, or another vulnerable situation. They may also find themselves in harm's way. Law enforcement needs to be notified immediately to determine the circumstances surrounding the disappearance of the child and to do their best to locate the child to be returned to the appointed guardian. An appointed guardian could also be a local department of social services.

Requiring DHS to immediately notify law enforcement of the missing child and having them provide the information outlined in the bill would help law enforcement officers tremendously in their search. The reporting provided from DHS under this bill would help ensure that law enforcement has all tools necessary to locate the missing child in the most crucial hours following their disappearance.

For these reasons, MCPA and MSA **SUPPORT HB 764** and urge a **FAVORABLE** report.